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Emissions-Free Truck Stops

No idling allowed at these eco-friendly truck stops where a new technology is helping to reduce diesel emissions from 18-wheelers.

Cleaner air and cooler cabs—without idling

Ask any long-haul truck driver, and he'll tell you that the cab of his 18-wheeler tractor-trailer is both office and sleeping quarters.

Truckers, for the most part, stay close to their rigs while making long-distance freight deliveries. When they pull over for a break, the drivers usually leave the diesel engines running to keep the cabs cool or warm.

After a typical 11-hour shift, truck drivers are required by federal law to rest at least 10 hours. Idling trucks consume an estimated one gallon of fuel each hour and emit carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and volatile organic compounds.

What if there were a way for truck drivers to rest comfortably without idling their heavy-duty truck engines?

IdleAire Technologies of Knoxville, Tenn., has come up with a system that keeps parked trucks operational while giving air quality a break.

At truck stops with this technology, truck drivers can turn off their engines and relax, while filtered air provided by IdleAire keeps the interior comfortable.



A view of the service module that snaps into the passenger window, allowing the truck driver to control temperature and other services./Photo by IdleAire Technologies Corp.

IdleAire, operating at six locations in Texas, was chosen as the TCEQ's environmental excellence award winner in the "technology innovation" category. The award was presented at the May 2005 Environmental Trade Fair and Conference.

The company has three advanced travel center electrification locations in El Paso and one each in Dallas, San Antonio, and Baytown, all of which can handle 440 trucks at a time.

Now in its fifth year, IdleAire is operating in 23 U.S. cities.

Truckers wheeling their rigs into these locations need only a \$10 window adapter to gain access to the air system, electrical outlets, a high-speed computer with touch-screen interface, unlimited Internet and e-mail, satellite TV, and a phone connection with free local calls. The unit

connects to the truck by a window-mounted service module.

The cost for basic service is \$1.60 an hour; movies, wireless Internet, and other features are extra.

"This system is more economical than idling the engine to provide heating and cooling for drivers," says David Everhart, IdleAire's chief operating officer. "Our existing sites operate 24 hours a day—this allows for a substantial, immediate reduction of emissions and immediate fuel conservation."

Everhart said the patented system benefits not only air quality outside, but the drivers inside who get to sleep without the noise, vibrations, and fumes from truck engines.

IdleAire plans future Texas sites in Beaumont, Houston, Laredo, and the Dallas area, he said.

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At IdleAire facilities, a heating, cooling, and ventilation unit is positioned above each parking space. A large flexible, concentric hose connects the unit to a service module, which houses the delivery mechanism for the communications and entertainment package./Photo by IdleAire Technologies Corp.